Placing the Order
by Emily Lazar

ghost water in muddy stream banks,
send me help in a box untied
don’t break my fine lines like they’re
toothpicks and fishing wire, instead
unseal for me some potential
and float it from the shingled coast
tonight on warm-water winds, from
ports where words are bought
and bottled, the ripest, the richest
I paid, I placed an order, I’m
expecting one ingenious stanza
to replace the one that fell away
from the middle of my latest
endeavor

for the price I paid
I hope to be able to tack
this new one over the empty,
bald spot on my stationery,
but you need to slip loose the knots
on the water-tight floating box
so that the contents can absorb
the night-owl calls and egg-white steam
of your current and be sure to
let it breathe, let its ribbons trail
and swim in black transparency
among the fishes and the murk-
stained water-stars, but that is all
because you must also preserve
what I’ve had packed and shipped for me
I place my trust in the placid
caress and direction of your
insubstantial limbs, ghost water,
be kind and don't break what I've bought
you can tell from my address I
don't have much out here but the mud
and my fishing pole and sunken
dock planks wrecked in mist-muck and
that is where I'll wait
all night if I have to, I have to